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DDI Newsletter

28 July 1983

Effective communication in a large organization is difficult. To hear concerns from the analyst point of view I have met each week for the last eighteen months with a different branch from the Directorate. I also meet each week with the branch and division chiefs of one of the offices. While these meetings provide me with an opportunity to hear various problems and concerns from within the Directorate, they also confirm for me how frequently things I have said in one forum or another either do not get passed on at all or change with each telling.

I have decided to experiment with a newsletter every two months (initially), discussing issues that I am aware are of concern to a number of people in the Directorate, developments in the Agency of general interest, and also to bring to your attention examples of high quality papers we have published and kudos received for our work. All too often, most of what you hear from me is through the critical review of your papers or exhortations for greater production or the need to continue improving our work. This may obscure the achievements of the Directorate and the very favorable response to our work among policymakers and the Congress. I see the newsletter as an opportunity to share some of this "good news" that is representative of most of what we do. If you have suggestions for making the newsletter more interesting or more helpful, please send me a note. This is an experiment; if it is not helpful or useful, I will not prolong it.

The NIC and the DI

As most of you know, on September 1st I will become Chairman of the NIC as well as Deputy Director for Intelligence. Inasmuch as I was one of the strongest advocates of separating the NIC from this Directorate for a variety of reasons, I intend to keep the two institutions entirely separate. While this two-hatted arrangement will be awkward in some respects, it is important to keep separate the equities of the National Intelligence Council and the Directorate of Intelligence. For example, when we have a problem with the text of a draft estimate, as in the past we will take a footnote. We will not impose CIA's views on the main text. Overall, the working relationship between the DI and the NIC has been pretty good; I ask for your continued cooperation and help.

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MAG Survey

The Management Advisory Group, Dick Kerr and I have been working together over the past several weeks to develop a survey questionnaire on the review process. Branch Chiefs, Division Chiefs, Office Directors, and analysts who have completed a paper since 1 October 82 will be asked to complete the questionnaires. The review process is a necessary evil; it has tightened review at all levels and has contributed to an improvement in the quality of our product. Nonetheless, some offices and divisions manage this process better than others and there are frustrations in the process that can be diminished or eliminated. The fairly detailed survey will attempt to isolate various parts of the review process in the hope of identifying some of these problems and allowing us to take action. If you are asked to complete the questionnaire, I hope you will do so with care.

Getting the Message to the Policymaker

Policymakers over the years repeatedly have complained that they do not have time to read much of the analysis we provide for them, even the summaries. In some departments, like State, our readers must make special arrangements with INR to read papers with a codeword classification. In a busy day with many competing priorities carrying out such arrangements is often just too difficult. A separate, but related aspect of reaching the customer is that he often does not know when we have reached him. In most policy agencies and the NSC Staff it is common practice for staffs to disassemble our papers, cut and paste our analysis and send forward our analysis as part of their own papers. I would hesitate to guess how often we get credit for material in these papers that is ours. One of the results, however, is that many policymakers, if surveyed, would respond that they rarely if ever see intelligence from CIA -- not realizing that a fairly hefty percentage of what they do see is cribbed from our materials.

As we increase production and write on more and more topics of interest and value to policy officials, we need to give greater attention to ensuring that our message reaches policymakers (and, immodestly, seeing to it that we get credit for our work). I believe the most productive way of doing this is to take a leaf from DIA's book and develop a more aggressive program of briefing the results of our research to interested policymakers, the Hill and military commands. It seems like a modest investment to take a few days to brief a paper to several audiences when that paper has taken months to prepare. Moreover, many of our customers respond better to briefings than to sitting down and reading papers, especially long ones.

I think all of the offices should give serious consideration to briefing more aggressively the results of their research and

analysis. Such briefings can always be arranged on an ad hoc basis, or it may be that occasionally the office director's bi-weekly parish call on the principal policy consumers could include one or two subjects for briefing. Right now is not too soon to implement or intensify this approach to reaching our consumers. A final thought: the dialogue that can take place during a briefing will often provide the opportunity to remove doubts or answer questions of our customers that might otherwise prejudice their judgment of the quality of our work. It is an approach that has a great deal to commend it, and I do so.

The NID

Many of you may have heard that I have asked Dick Kerr to take a look at the NID with respect to its content and style. We probably have given insufficient attention and resources to this product in view of its broad-based, high-level readership. In part, this has been due to the fine job that [] and his people have been doing. While we have nothing definite in mind at this time, I would like the NID to mirror some of the freshness that characterizes the PDB, and broaden its coverage, particularly in the economic area.

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Continuing Concerns

While I am generally content with the progress we are making in improving the quality of our product and productivity, there are areas of our effort that seem to me to be lagging:

- Conferences and Seminars: I sense a falling off in the priority given to organizing outside conference and seminars with outside specialists by the offices. We had about fifty of these conferences last year. They provide a valuable opportunity to hear the views of specialists from outside this Agency whose ideas, including the unorthodox ones, can only help us as we analyze various problems. I urge continued attention to the opportunities presented by such conferences and seminars.
- Outside Critiques: Similarly, I hope we are continuing to make use of the opportunities provided by having cleared specialists outside the Agency review and critique our drafts. We also should ensure that we not just turn to people who we know agree with us, but call on the services of those who we know will have some disagreements. Then we will know that we have considered all of the possibilities in a given situation. While all of the criticisms and ideas need not be incorporated in our drafts, the contacts expose us to different views and unorthodox perspectives on problems. We should give special attention to using outside experts at the time you are putting together terms of reference or an outline to help identify areas

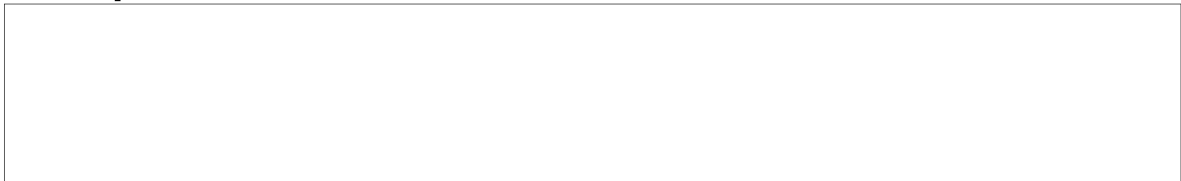
to pursue before a draft is completed (and also at a time when we are probably more receptive to new ideas than at the end of the process).

- PARs: Progress is being made in using the analyst's product file in preparing the PAR, notably specific papers or articles that an analyst has written as illustrations of strengths and weaknesses. There is still a good deal of room for improvement in this area, however. Supervisors need to make greater use of the file as an aid in evaluating performance.
- Alternative Scenarios: We still have not made adequate progress in exploring the implications should a given event or development come out differently than we project. We still rely too much on the single-outcome approach in our papers. This often does not reflect our uncertainties about a situation, or the amount and reliability of our evidence. Failure to address realistic though less likely alternative outcomes and the implications of them for the US can be very dangerous. The post-mortem of NFAC's performance on the Iranian Crisis in the late 70's stated:

"NFAC added to these handicaps by not being in touch with non-governmental experts on Iran, some of whom had views that differed with those dominant in the government and possessed information about the opposition and non-elite segments that NFAC did not have.... What was needed in the Iranian situation, however, was sustained and thorough evaluation of the most important questions.... Such analysis should have examined alternative interpretation of events and mustered all of the evidence that could be found. Instead, the format of NFAC production and informal norms of the Intelligence Community led to intelligence that focused on the latest events and reports, that presented one view, and that induced little evidence."

Papers of Note

Analysts often ask me for examples of high quality papers that exemplify good sourcing, writing, multidisciplinary analysis, and so forth. Below are some papers published in the last few weeks that I thought especially good and brief comments about why I thought so. (There were many other good papers during this period.)



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Kudos

We frequently receive compliments on our work from policymakers, Ambassadors and others. A selection of these for the last few weeks include:

- Judge Clark: "The Agency provided invaluable support for the success achieved at the Williamsburg Summit.

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- Leo Cherne (Vice Chairman, PFIAB): "Just a note to call to your attention my view that the people in your Office

of Global Issues are doing a fine job in addressing the problems created by the strained international financial situation.... ...most impressed with the quality and thoroughness of their work. The Agency should be commended for the quality of its continuing response to what has been a very difficult issue."

-- Hugh Montgomery (Director, INR/State): "Once again I want to express my appreciation for some fine work being done in the Office of Scientific and Weapons Research. ...the Nuclear Energy Divison [] was able, in a timely fashion,...to place in perspective the safeguards implications of heavy water utilization and losses...."

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-- Ambassador Myles Frechette, Director of Cuban Affairs/State: Perhaps the greatest pleasure in working with the (Cuba-Caribbean) Branch was the unbureaucratic and extremely cooperative attitude of its staff.Substantively, of course, the Branch's product is unsurpassed.I can think of no greater praise for the Branch's work other than to say that the Department and I relied on it absolutely. The Branch is staffed by a group of highly dedicated and motivated professionals whose knowledge of Cuba is unrivalled in the US government."

-- Ambassador Bray (Ambassador to Senegal): "We have been most impressed by the analysis in this study [] and commend it to the Washington readership. It is the best holistic analysis of Senegal -- including our own reporting -- which we have read in recent years."

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-- Treasury Secretary Donald Regan in response to OGI/EURA/SOVA work on the impact of oil price decline: "I wanted you to know that other members of the group -- George Shultz, Mac Baldrige, David Stockman, Ed Harper, Marty Feldstein, and I appreciate your efforts. Our discussions were enhanced greatly by the quality and timeliness of your input."

-- [] of OGI briefed the President and the entire NSC on the international debt problem.

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-- [] of OSWR briefed the President and the NSC on the Soviet space program.

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-- From Embassy Monrovia: "You should know that your [] study was beautifully received here in the Embassy []. The Ambassador has scheduled a seminar 5 July with your study as required reading and focus of seminar. All of us found [] very well done...."

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-- Assistant Secretary Brady/Commerce: "I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the excellent study performed by your staff on the Soviet uses of economic relations for political purposes. It will be directly useful in my work and in helping to shape the policies of this Administration. In particular, I would like to commend both [redacted] for the briefing they did for me and my senior advisors.... Thanks for your excellent work."

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-- Hugh Montgomery, Director, INR/State: "Begin's Gloomy Mood" [redacted] an excellent piece of analysis and exceptionally timely. Memorandum given to Secretary Shultz before his trip to the Middle East."

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Nice going.

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Robert M. Gates
Deputy Director for Intelligence

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